

## Student Support Team: Specific Learning Disabilities and Reading Fluency as a Basic Skill Area

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 has included *reading fluency* skills in the basic skill areas influencing the presence of a specific learning disability. (§)300.309 (a)1(v)

- I. Oral expression
- II. Listening comprehension
- III. Written expression
- IV. Basic reading Skills
- V. **Reading fluency skills**
- VI. Reading comprehension
- VII. Mathematics calculation
- VIII. Mathematics problem solving

“Reading fluency refers to efficient, effective word recognition skills that permit a reader to construct the meaning of a text. Fluency is manifested in accurate, rapid, expressive oral reading and is applied during, and makes possible, silent reading comprehension”. (Pikulski & Chard, 2005)  
Reading fluency is an essential element for reading comprehension to occur. Lack of reading fluency has been identified by research as a reliable predictor contributing to difficulty in reading comprehension. Without automatic decoding the reader’s capacity to construct meaning from text is significantly impeded. The reader is not able to access the author’s meaning, use prior knowledge to interact personally with text, or to make connections from the text to world. Reading words automatically frees up processing space so the reader can engage in higher level thinking. The task of recognizing and decoding words is laborious as each sound is blended to form words. When words cannot be read as automatic gestalts, the reader is unable to rely on other text features to gain meaning. Lack of automaticity, as a result of slow processing speed (rapid automatic naming), is a core deficit of learning disabilities, as well as inefficient decoding, and word recognition. As a result of the correlation of poor reading fluency to core deficits identifying a specific learning disability, the IDEA 2004, included reading fluency skills as an additional basic skill area.

Nine Steps to Building Fluency, identified by Pikulski, J.J. & Chard, D.J. (2005). Fluency: Bridge between decoding and reading comprehension. The Reading Teacher, 58 (6) 510-519

- Develop orthographic/phonological foundations (phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, phonics).
- Increase vocabulary and oral language skills.
- Effectively teach high-frequency vocabulary and provide adequate practice.
- Teach common word-parts and spelling patterns.
- Effectively teach decoding skills and provide adequate practice.
- Provide students with appropriate texts to assist in building fluent reading.
- Use guided oral repeated reading strategies for struggling readers.
- Support, guide and encourage wide-reading.
- Implement appropriate screening and progress monitoring assessments.

The following matrix was designed to support evaluation and planning teams in selection of possible fluency measures to include in a comprehensive evaluation when reading fluency has been impeding access to general education and which may be the result of a specific learning disability.

### Reading Fluency as an Indicator in the Identification of SLD

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	Possible SLD Disability Assessment Measures	Adverse Effect	Examples of Research-Based Strategies/Programs
<b>Severe Discrepancy</b> 1. What is the student's level of cognitive performance?  2. Does the student have a specific learning disability which manifests as an imperfect ability to read fluently, demonstrated by a 1.5 standard deviation discrepancy between performance and ability?  3. Is the disability primarily the result of a visual, hearing or motor disability, a learning impairment, emotional disturbance, cultural factors or environmental or economic disadvantage?	<b>Cognitive Measures</b> EPT cognitive assessment of choice for discrepancy  Consider other processing factors: W-J III Cognitive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working Memory Cluster</li> <li>Delayed Recall Cluster</li> <li>Long Term Retrieval Cluster</li> <li>Short Term Memory Cluster</li> </ul> WISC-IV Processing Speed Index  <b>Standardized Measures</b> (Most measures of fluency are highly correlated) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE)</li> <li>Wechsler Individual Achievement Test II (WIAT II), Reading Speed</li> <li>Nelson Denny Reading Test</li> <li>Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency</li> </ul> (The Gray Oral Reading can support findings using the combined scaled score for rate and accuracy, in identifying student performance reading longer text passages)	<b>Standardized Measures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE)</li> <li>Wechsler Individual Achievement Test II (WIAT II), Reading Speed</li> <li>Nelson Denny Reading Test</li> <li>Test of Silent Word Reading Fluency</li> </ul> EPT may consider using additional standardized measures with above assessments to further characterize core deficits related to specific learning disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WJIII Reading Fluency</li> <li>CTOPP Rapid object naming</li> <li>Rapid Automatized Naming and Rapid Alternating Stimulus Tests (Pro Ed)</li> <li>Gray Oral Reading Test-4 (Rate &amp; Accuracy combined scale score)</li> </ul> <b>Criterion Referenced</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GRADE Reading Fluency Indicator</li> <li>AIMS WEB               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter Naming Fluency</li> <li>Phoneme Segmentation Fluency</li> <li>Nonsense Word Fluency</li> <li>R-CBM</li> <li>MAZE</li> </ul> </li> <li>DIBELS (same)</li> <li>Qualitative Reading Inventory-4 (QRI-4)</li> <li>K-3 Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment (ERDA)</li> </ul>	Phrasing and Chunking Text (Hook, 2001)  Paired Reading  Explicit instruction with attention to text features (Hiebert, 2005)  <b>Repeated Reading</b> Student-Adult Choral Reading Tape-Assisted Reading Partner Reading Reader's Theatre Echo Reading  <b>Programs</b> <i>Speed Drills/Multi-sequence Speed Drills</i> , Oxtan House  <i>Sound Sensible, S.P.I.R.E.</i> (EPS)

<p><b>Responsiveness to Instruction</b></p> <p>1. Does the student have a specific learning disability which manifests as an imperfect ability to read fluently, demonstrated by a lack of response to increasing levels of intervention using research-based instruction?</p> <p>2. Is the disability primarily the result of a visual, hearing or motor disability, a learning impairment, emotional disturbance, cultural factors or environmental or economic disadvantage?</p>	<p><b>Norm referenced, standardized benchmark curriculum based assessment (fall, winter, spring)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AIMSWEB: K – 8</b> K – Letter Naming Fluency 1 – Letter Naming Fluency (Fall only) Letter Sound Fluency Phonemic Segmentation Fluency Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) 2 – NWF Reading Curriculum Based Measurement Fluency (R-CBM) 3 – 8 R-CBM MAZE</li> <li>• <b>Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS): K-6 *</b> *similar to AIMSWEB</li> </ul> <p>(Continuous progress monitoring w/above-like measures weekly as needed)</p> <p><b>Classroom Curriculum Based Measurement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running Records</li> <li>• Words Correct Per One Minute/unpracticed text passage compared to GLEs/oral fluency norms</li> <li>• Diagnostic Fluency Assessment (DFA), Ganske</li> </ul> <p><b>Other measures as identified by EPT to further characterize core SLD Deficits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WJIII Reading Fluency</li> <li>• CTOPP Rapid object naming</li> <li>• Rapid Automatized Naming and Rapid Alternating Stimulus Tests (Pro Ed)</li> <li>• Gray Oral Reading Test-4 (rate and accuracy scaled score combined)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Curriculum –Based Measures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Running Records</li> <li>• Words read per minute (WRPM)from selected unpracticed text passages compared to GEs/oral fluency norms</li> <li>• Diagnostic Fluency Assessment (DFA), Ganske</li> <li>• Reading fluency (WPM) within content area(s)</li> </ul> <p><b>Grades</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading fluency, as an indirect measure, may be a reason for low grades within a content area</li> </ul>	<p><i>Read Naturally, Read Naturally, Inc.</i></p> <p><i>Great Leaps Reading, Diarmuid, Inc.</i></p> <p><i>Wilson Reading System</i></p>
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